

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 183 033

FL 011 274

AUTHOR Bancroft, W. Jane
TITLE Caycedo's Sophrology and Lozanov's Suggestology:
Mirror Images of a System.
PUB DATE [79]
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Conference on Suggestive
and Accelerative Learning and Teaching. (1979)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Environment: Educational Innovation;
*Language Instruction: *Learning Processes;
*Memorizing: *Second Language Learning: *Teaching
Methods
IDENTIFIERS Hypernesia: *Sophrology: *Suggestopedia: Yoga

ABSTRACT

In the 1960's, two medical doctors, Georgi Lozanov and Alfonso Caycedo, discovered independently that certain yogic techniques of physical and mental relaxation could be used to produce not only analgesia but also improved memory and concentration. Systems originally used in medicine and psycho-therapy were applied to education, in particular to subjects such as foreign languages that require the memorization of large amounts of factual materials. In Sofia, Bulgaria, at the Institute of Suggestology headed by Dr. Lozanov, a team of experts, led by Aleko Novakov, combined yoga relaxation and verbal suggestion with the direct method to produce a unique system of foreign language teaching: Suggestopedia. At the Instituto Alfonso Caycedo in Barcelona, work in Sophrology is based on techniques derived from the ancient East, in addition to Western Europe. Educators have taken from Sophrology its special voice training (Terpnos Logos) and its techniques of physical and mental relaxation (including breathing, visualization and concentration exercises) which, like those originally used in the Lozanov Method, promote hypernesia. Within the context of Sophrology, Caycedo has developed a memory training system which is very similar to the original suggestopedic seance(s). (Author)

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Caycedo's Sophrology and Lozanov's Suggestology

Mirror Images of a System

W. Jane Bancroft

In the 1960's, two medical doctors, Georgi Lozanov and Alfonso Caycedo, discovered, no doubt independently one of the other, that certain yogic techniques of physical and mental relaxation could be used to produce a state of analgesia, or relief from pain, on the one hand, and a state of hypermnnesia, or greatly improved memory and concentration, on the other. ¹ In Sofia, Bulgaria, at the Institute of Suggestology headed by Dr. Lozanov, a team of experts, led by Aleko Novakov, combined yoga relaxation and verbal suggestion with the direct method to produce a unique system of foreign language teaching: Suggestopedia. ² At the Instituto Alfonso Caycedo in Barcelona, research in Sophrology, the system founded by Dr. Caycedo, is based on techniques derived from the ancient East, in addition to hypnosis, verbal suggestion and autogenic therapy. (The word "sophrology" combines the Greek words sōs (sound), phrēn (mind) and logos (study) to mean the study of a sound mind or a harmonious consciousness). While most work in Sophrology has been done in medicine (especially in obstetrics), its techniques have been applied to fields as diverse as sports and pedagogy. Educators (particularly in Spain and France) have taken from Sophrology its special voice training

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(Terpnos Logos) and its techniques of mental and physical relaxation (including breathing, visualization and concentration exercises) which, like those originally used in the Lozanov Method, promote hypermnnesia and creativity. Like Suggestology/Suggestopedia, Sophrology has been applied in pedagogy to subjects like foreign languages which require, at least initially, the memorization of large amounts of basic factual materials. Within the context of Sophrology, Caycedo has developed a memory training system which is very similar in its basic structures to the original suggestopedic séance(s).

Like the psychotherapeutical method espoused by Dr. Lozanov at the Institute of Suggestology in Sofia,³ Dr. Caycedo's system of Sophrology emphasizes holistic and prophylactic medicine. The patient is considered not as the sum of one or more suffering organs but as a human being in a temporary state of illness; he is treated as a unity; mind and body are considered as one. The doctor or therapist (and these ideas are projected into education) is not merely a prescriber of medicines or remedies but a collaborator, either with the individual patient or with the individual as part of a group. While the doctor or therapist is very much an authority figure, the patient must take responsibility for his own well-being. As in Lozanov's psychotherapeutical system, the patient in Sophrology undergoes anamnesis: an interview bearing on his past, professional situation and reasons for undergoing therapy. The method is explained and its procedures outlined.

The patient is guided through techniques of physical and mental relaxation, referred to as simple sophronisation, followed by desophronisation or "coming out." The session concludes with what is termed a post-sophronic discussion, or dialogue between therapist and patient(s).

Sophrology stresses the importance of the personality of the therapist (or teacher) in much the same way as Suggestology/Suggestopedia. Lozanov emphasizes the authority of the doctor (or professor) and the "infantilization" or spontaneity and confidence of the subject. Sophronic alliance is the term used to describe the special relationship, or pact of confidence, which exists between the sophrologue and the patient or student. As in Suggestology, the relaxed but nonetheless authoritative attitude of the sophrologue is considered to be a very important part of the treatment process--especially in dealing with patients suffering from psychosomatic illnesses. Suggestology talks about the role of the environment, both social and physical, using the term "double-planeness." Caycedo considers the milieu, which must be calm and tranquil, to be an essential factor in treatment or pedagogy. Sophrology is considered by its practitioners to be not only a science and a therapeutical system but also a philosophy,⁴ a way of life and an art. One is reminded of Lozanov's belief that the teacher and the physician must become artists in their chosen profession.

Lozanov stresses the importance of intonation and rhythm in the pedagogical or therapeutical process; in his thesis, Sugestologia, he states, for example, that the rhythmically correct intonational presentation of the program for memorization ensures that a large volume of material will be memorized and retained.⁵ Sophrology devotes a great deal of attention to special voice training: the correct positioning of the voice (as in yoga), together with the proper rhythm of presentation. "Il suffit [. . .] que le sophrologue utilise le Terpnos Logos avec son rythme, la voix douce et monocorde, pour obtenir [. . .] l'état sophronique."⁶ The therapist's persuasive, suggestive voice is instrumental in bringing about the state of sophronisation (or altered state of consciousness) in the patient during the appropriate exercises of relaxation. As in Soviet therapy, the voice in Sophrology is considered to be a stimulus capable of provoking emotional and physiological reactions in the patient.

As mentioned above, the special term chosen for the sophrologist's voice is Terpnos Logos. Like the term sophrology, Terpnos Logos comes from the Greek--more specifically from Homer who spoke of the epode (or words with therapeutic effect) which can be divided into three parts: magic words, mythological words and the Terpnos Logos, sung or spoken. In one of his dialogues, Plato is said by sophrologists to lay the foundation for "verbal psychotherapy." In the dialogue between Socrates and Charmides, Socrates agrees to cure the young man of a violent headache with

the aid of a certain plant and a certain epode or incantation. This method of treatment comes from a doctor in Thrace who said his king affirmed that one must not treat the head (or body) without treating the soul. As the source of all good and evil, the soul must be nurtured if the body is to be in good health. The soul is cured by incantations.⁷

Plato explains how the Terpnos Logos, a special kind of voice--soft, monotonous, monochord like the single string of an instrument--acts on the spirit by producing the sophrosynic state--⁸ a state of calmness, tranquillity and supreme concentration. In Epidaurus, one of the treatments used in the sanctuary of Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine, consisted of placing the sick in a tholus (or round building) and having the priest-doctors chant positive healing suggestions through holes in the walls, just behind the patients' heads, during their sleep.

The physical and mental relaxation exercises used in Sophrology appear much more elaborate than the ones Lozanov and his staff probably used to train students and/or treat patients in the late 1960's and early 1970's at the Institute of Suggestology. Nonetheless, the Sophrology exercises, which are used for treatment as well as for preventive medicine, are largely based, like Lozanov's, on yoga and Schultz' autogenic therapy and have the same purpose as Lozanov's original ones--the integration of the conscious and the unconscious, the linking of mind and body, the promotion of relaxation, on the one hand, and the concentration of attention, on the other.

Sophrology exercises are divided into two broad categories: "passive" methods and "active" methods. (The terminology reminds one of the "active" and "passive" parts of the relaxation session in Suggestopedia). Passive methods include: simple sophronisation, intra-sophronic activation, progressive sophro-acceptance, synchronic sophro-respiration. Active methods are dynamic relaxation techniques of the so-called first, second and third degree. Let us look briefly at some of these methods.⁹

I. Passive Methods

a) Simple sophronisation (physical and mental relaxation). The subject assumes a comfortable, immobile position--usually stretched out on the floor, although he can also be sitting or even standing. To promote concentration, the sophrologue asks him to breathe deeply once or twice and to close his eyes. The subject is then asked to relax, in turn, the key parts of the body, beginning with the face, and moving downward. Once the appropriate state of physical relaxation has been achieved, the subject is asked to go deeper, progressively deeper, until he reaches an altered state of consciousness, intermediate between sleep and wakefulness. He "goes deeper" while noting all possible modifications in colors, sounds, etc. The subject is then asked to be conscious of his body in this physically and mentally relaxed state and to note the profound state of well-being he experiences. The sophrologue tells him that each time he practises this simple method of relaxation he will improve his mental and physical health.

Following one or two minutes' silence, the process of de-sophronisation begins. This "coming out" is performed in four stages: deep breathing during which the subject comes back "to the surface"; movements with feet, hands and face which "bring back" these three areas of the body; stretching of other body parts as if the subject has just had an excellent night's sleep; eyes open. The de-sophronisation is followed by a dialogue during which the subject comments on his sensations and feelings during the period of sophronisation and de-sophronisation. Using cassette recordings, the patient will perform these exercises two or three times a day at home, preferably before meals so as to avoid post-repast sleepiness. After a week or so, the subject will pass to the next stage of therapy: intrasophronic activation.

b) Intra-sophronic activation. This stage will be realized with the help of Schultz' autogenic training exercises. During the week following simple sophronisation, once the subject has reached an altered state of consciousness, the sophrologue adds the perception of heaviness of the various parts of the body. The following week, the sensation of warmth will be added; the week after that, the subject will be trained to perceive his heart beat. The week following, the subject will be trained to breathe properly--from the diaphragm--and to be aware of his breathing. (Proper breathing is considered extremely important for mental relaxation). Each time he breathes out, the subject will "go deeper" into his consciousness. After five weeks of training with simple sophronisation and its various activations,

the perception of warmth at the abdominal level will be added (this is essential for improved blood circulation), as well as the sensation of coolness of the forehead. Simple sophronisation, with its various intrasophronic activations, serves as the basis for all other sophrological methods. As verified by the EEG and the EMG, results have been excellent; the subject becomes aware of his faculties of concentration and re-discovers his body, his physical sensations and perceptions.

The so-called passive methods evolving out of simple sophronisation with its various intrasophronic activations have been classified by Dr. Caycedo into three categories: 1) those acting on the present: simple sophronisation, sensorial sophro-substitution and synchronic sophro-respiration; 2) those acting on the future: progressive sophro-acceptance, serial sophro-correction, sophro-liminal protection and projective sophro-stimulation; 3) those directed towards the past: simple sophromnesia, free sophromnesia and oniric sophro-association. The sophronic alliance between therapist and subject is essential in all variations of sophronisation.

Certain of these methods are rarely used: serial sophro-correction, simple sophromnesia, oniric sophro-association and projective sophro-stimulation. The normal therapeutic sequence is: simple sophronisation, intrasophronic activations, progressive sophro-acceptance, synchronic sophro-respiration, sophro-liminal protection, sensorial sophro-substitution. The therapy concludes with the so-called "integral method" during which the sophrologue

integrates the most pleasant aspects of the treatment (according to the sensations of the patient) with the subject's aspirations in his professional and personal life.

c) Progressive sophro-acceptance. Once the state of sophronisation has been reached, the sophrologue asks the subject to imagine a positive situation which will take place in the near future, in an ideal setting and at a preferred hour of the day. The subject will try to visualize as many details of this ideal scene as possible (colors, objects, etc.). The sophrologue asks the subject to put himself in this ideal setting, alone or surrounded by relatives and friends; when he has done so, he is to raise his index finger. The subject is then asked to become aware of his feeling of well-being in this situation, to appreciate the pleasant sensations he feels, the harmony which exists between him and his surroundings. Thanks to daily training (with cassette recordings), the subject learns to replace negative sensations with positive ones. The pleasant feelings and sensations of the "ideal scene" are transferred to the present. (This method is frequently used in obstetrics, in sports training and in exam preparation).

d) Synchronic sophro-respiration. This method uses respiration as a means of auto-conditioning and serves as a basis for sophro-liminal protection. In a state of sophronisation, the subject concentrates on his breathing, calmly, freely, and each time he breathes out, he mentions a word of his own choosing, one which induces a state of well-being--tranquillity, peace, harmony, etc. Then he "goes deeper" and, each time he breathes

out, he mentions a short sentence which expresses the dynamic, active realization of a project: "Tomorrow, I'll win the game." "Tomorrow, I'll pass my exam." As is the case with the other methods, synchronic sophro-respiration is followed by de-sophronisation and post-sophronic dialogue between therapist and subject.

e) Sophro-liminal protection. In a state of sophronisation, the subject is asked to imagine the moment of going to bed, in the evening, and to outline his habits at that time, then to turn out the light (mentally) and to go through the synchronic sophro-respiration exercise, mentioning the word "calm" while breathing out as he imagines himself falling asleep. Calmness will then be a part of his sleep and dreams. This exercise is practised during the day as a preparation for the act of going to sleep. The second part of the exercise consists of the subject's visualizing daybreak, imagining his waking up, getting dressed, accomplishing a specific project. This treatment is used for insomnia and replaces sleeping pills which have a negative effect on paradoxical sleep.

f) Sensorial sophro-substitution. This method follows training in the preceding methods, in particular, sophronisation and progressive sophro-acceptance. In a state of sophronisation, the subject is asked to become aware of a spontaneously felt sensation, say, warmth in the palm of the hand. The sophrologue invites the subject to change this sensation into another one--coolness, for example. (If desirable, images such as cool water flowing over the palm of the hand can be utilized). This method

is used by dentists as a basis for local analgesia and, in obstetrics, for the replacing of a painful sensation by a pleasant one.

II. Active Methods

Active methods are techniques of dynamic relaxation, originating in the Orient, which can be used for individual or group therapy. Although the term "dynamic relaxation" seems self-contradictory, these exercises of muscle contraction bring about a state of mental relaxation. Respiratory exercises used bring a greater supply of oxygen to the brain and improve concentration.

Dynamic relaxation is divided into three degrees. 1) The first degree is based on techniques derived from yoga (Indian yoga). The subject is asked to concentrate on the contraction of his muscles and on the sensations following a given contraction. Breathing and visualization exercises are included in the first degree. 2) The second degree is based on Buddhist techniques. The subject is asked to contemplate his body (his senses, for example) from the outside, while performing a number of exercises which synchronize breathing with body movements. 3) The third degree is based on Japanese zen. In this third part, the subject becomes aware of his breathing, identifies with objects in nature and performs meditation exercises. Before practising dynamic relaxation, the subject rinses his nostrils with salt water based on a special formula and a special temperature (that of the body). This exercise purifies the nasal passages and acts on the cranial

nerves; it makes for better respiration, on the one hand, and better concentration, on the other.

A number of comparisons are possible between the elaborately detailed Sophrology exercises and the obliquely referred to Suggestology exercises in the Bulgarian original of the Lozanov thesis. We note the importance of a comfortable, immobile posture for proper physical and mental relaxation; the utilization of the progressive relaxation exercise (originally used in the suggestopedic language class as part of the séance); synchronized breathing exercises; visualization exercises (in the suggestopedic language class, the visualization of the "ideal scene" is contained in the language dialogue for the day); positive suggestions for well-being. Sophrology measures relaxation response with the EMG and the increase of alpha waves in the brain with the EEG; in the same way as Suggestology, Sophrology links the ideal state of relaxation to the "alpha state"--an altered state of consciousness--and to the lowering of the pulse beat.

While Suggestopedia was and still is the main focus of Suggestology, not too much seems to have been written as yet on the applications of Sophrology to pedagogy. However, because of the relief from fatigue, on the one hand, and the improvement of memory, concentration and attention, on the other, Sophrology, like Suggestology, is especially suited to education and to the study of such subjects as foreign languages. About thirty teachers in Spain, in centers like Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia,

are currently using Sophrology exercises with normal children for some fifteen minutes in the morning before regular classes begin and/or in therapeutic work with "problem" children--those who have learning and/or coordination difficulties. Sophrology has been successfully used in Paris by Jean Cureau (of the Lycée 10 Voltaire) and Fanny Saféris in experimental language classes. According to its adherents, Sophrology, like Suggestology, has numerous pseudo-pedagogical benefits, among them: the acquiring of self-confidence, belief in one's capacities, emotional development and self-expression, capacity for relaxation, concentration of attention, improved creativity.

Within the context of Sophrology, Dr. Caycedo has developed at his Institute in Barcelona a memory training system which is being used in Spanish schools, along with regular sophrological 11 exercises. This memory training system is derived from Japanese zen ("a perfection of raja yoga," according to Caycedo) and from the third degree of Caycedo's dynamic relaxation. Caycedo believes that memory is a function of consciousness; if consciousness is in disorder, then so is memory. For therapeutic and pedagogical reasons, Caycedo insists on the positive aspects of memory (for example, positive, as opposed to negative or "neutral" sensations). He believes that memory has five functions: 1) evocation (for example, of a positive sensation from the past); 2) fixation (or concentration on this positive sensation); 3) association (of colors, objects, persons with this positive sensation); 4) repetition (the positive sensation must be impressed on the mind);

5) presentation (an amplification or a summary of this positive sensation is presented in written or oral form). Much like the SALT "Early pleasant learning recall" exercise,¹² the Caycedo system for memory training uses, in the classroom, study or exam situations, instead of personal or "therapeutic" ones. Once the students have been trained in the system (the course at the Instituto Alfonso Caycedo lasts four days which, curiously enough, is the same time-period which was allotted to relaxation training in the original Lozanov Method), they are able, just before an exam, for example, to visualize themselves in the appropriate "zen" postures and to put themselves mentally in the appropriate state of relaxed alertness.

Dr. Caycedo believes that the physical and psychological aspects of man are inseparably linked and that the body is the ideal instrument for developing or training the memory. Caycedo insists particularly on the importance of 1) abdominal respiration and the coordination of breathing with thought or image; 2) proper cerebral circulation (as aided, for example, by the relaxation of the neck muscles); 3) correct posture(s) for relaxation and concentration. (The original Lozanov Method coordinated breathing with thought or image in the special séances and used special postures adapted from yoga).

Caycedo's memory training system uses three postures derived from Japanese zen: 1) standing posture, with hands crossed over stomach, eyes closed, feet slightly apart (this posture is used for the simple sophronisation exercise described earlier under

ENTRENAMIENTO SOFROLOGICO DE LA MEMORIA



POSTURA 1



POSTURA 2



POSTURA 3

"passive methods"); 2) seated posture, with feet stretched out, hands crossed over stomach, eyes closed, bottom of back away from chair, slight inclination backwards of upper body; 3) seated posture with back straight up and away from chair, slight curve in lower back but no slouching of shoulders, hands crossed over stomach, eyes open or half-open, knees bent and feet under chair. Posture 2 is used for evocation, fixation and association; posture 3 for the repetition of these three functions. Following the process of de-sophronisation (described under "passive methods"), a normal seated posture is used for presentation, in oral or written form, of the recorded sensation or study theme.

The two seated postures from Japanese zen are linked by Dr. Caycedo to two levels of consciousness. Posture 2 is linked to a deep level of consciousness, close to sleep, and to the first movement of memory in its three functions (viz. evocation, fixation and association). Posture 3 is linked to a higher level of consciousness, to reinforcement, repetition of the first three functions of memory and organization of the elements for presentation. Students of Suggestopedia will note that postures 2 and 3 and the levels of consciousness they represent bear a close resemblance to the original two-part séance or yogic relaxation session in the suggestopedic language class, except that the order is reversed. As developed by Aleko Novakov at the Institute of Suggestology in the late 1960's and early 1970's, Suggestopedia began with outward concentration on the text, at a higher level

of awareness; the original "concert session," during which the students, with eyes closed, meditated on a text which was read, in the appropriate rhythm, over baroque slow movements, corresponds to a deeper level of consciousness and to Caycedo's posture 2. (For the original concert session at the Institute of Suggestology, students were seated in the alternate Savasana posture). Caycedo's five functions of memory--with evocation, fixation and association preceding repetition and presentation--correspond to Aleko Novakov's theory of "interiorization of language" in which meditation on, or visualization of a text furthers the students' ability to speak and communicate, as well as memorize.

Both Caycedo and Lozanov talk or write about the "unique" character of their systems. It is certainly true that the philosophical bases of Suggestology and Sophrology are different: Caycedo is in the Catholic tradition of the Latin countries and the phenomenological tradition of West European philosophy while Lozanov belongs to the Soviet tradition of psychotherapy and Marxism. Nonetheless, both doctors have travelled the royal road of yoga and both have been greatly influenced by the traditions of the East. Behind different names and different terms, one finds the same (or similar) ideas in Sophrology and Suggestology and in the pedagogical applications of these systems.

Scarborough College, University of Toronto

Notes

1

Boon, Dr. Henri, Dr. Yves Davrou and Jean-Claude Macquet, La Sophrologie (Paris: Editions Retz, 1976), pp. 78-79; p. 173. In the 1960's, both Caycedo and Lozanov used hypnosis and relaxation techniques for "painless" operations; some of these techniques subsequently entered their pedagogical systems. While Lozanov has published a thesis outlining his theories and experiments--Sugestologia (Sofia: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1971)--Caycedo does not intend to write the definitive work on Sophrology until all his research work has been completed. Among the books and articles on Sophrology which have been written, in Spanish or in French, by Dr. Caycedo and/or his collaborators, the most accessible (and the most complete) for the non-medical layman is La Sophrologie. (Caycedo's major work to date is: La India de los Yoguis (Barcelona: Editorial Andes Internacional, 1977)).

2

For an account of Suggestopedia as it existed at the Institute of Suggestology in the late 1960's and early 1970's, see my article, "The Lozanov Language Class." (ERIC Documents on Foreign Language Teaching and Linguistics, 1975. 53 pp. ED 108 475).

3

For an account of Lozanov's original psychotherapeutical method, see my article, "Suggestology and Suggestopedia: The Theory of the Lozanov Method." (ERIC Documents on Foreign Language Teaching and Linguistics, 1977. 56 pp. ED 132 857).

4

La Sophrologie. p. 76.

⁵
Sugestologia, pp. 242-43.

⁶
La Sophrologie, p. 126.

⁷
La Sophrologie, p. 77.

⁸
According to sophrologists, there are three main states of consciousness: pathological, normal and the so-called sophro-synic state (La Sophrologie, pp. 74 ff.).

⁹
For a complete account of the active and passive methods used in Sophrology, see: La Sophrologie, pp. 130-64.

¹⁰
La Sophrologie, pp. 203-208.

¹¹
Information on Caycedo's memory training system is taken from official notes on the four-day "Curso de Entrenamiento Sofrologico de la Memoria," held at the Instituto Alfonso Caycedo from May 28 to May 31, 1979, and from conversations with Dr. Caycedo during late-May and early-June, 1979.

¹²
For a description of the Early pleasant learning recall exercise, taken from the SALT Manual of Classroom Procedures Based on the Lozanov Method (Des Moines: Society for Suggestive-Accelerative Learning and Teaching, 1976), see my article, "The Lozanov Method and its American Adaptations," The Modern Language Journal (April 1978), pp. 174-75.